

RIGHTS OF CRIME VICTIMS

As defined in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 56, Subchapter A, Crime Victims’ Rights, a victim of a violent crime is someone who: (1) has suffered bodily injury or death as a result of criminally injurious conduct, or who has been the victim of a crime involving sexual assault, kidnapping, or aggravated robbery; (2) is the close relative (spouse, parent, brother, sister, or adult child) or (3) is the guardian of a victim. As a victim of violent crime, you have the following rights:



- 1. The right to receive adequate protection from harm and threats of harm arising from cooperation with prosecution efforts.
- 2. The right to have the magistrate take your safety and that of your family into consideration when bail is being considered.
- 3. The right, if you so request, to be informed of relevant court proceedings and of those court proceedings that have been canceled or rescheduled and to be informed of appellate proceedings.
- 4. The right, if you so request, to information about procedures in the criminal investigation of your case by law enforcement officials and about general procedures in the criminal justice system, including plea bargaining, restitution, appeals, and parole, from the prosecutor’s office.
- 5. The right to receive information about the Texas Crime Victims’ Compensation fund that provides financial assistance to victims of violent crimes and, if you so request, referral to available social service agencies that may provide additional help.

6. The right to provide information to a probation department conducting a pre-sentence investigation on the impact of the crime.

7. The right to have a law enforcement agency pay for medical examinations for victims of sexual assault and on request, the right to counseling regarding AIDS and HIV infection and testing for sexual assault victims.

8. If you so request, the right to be notified of parole proceedings by the Victim Services Section of the Pardons and Paroles Division, the right to participation in the parole process by submitting a Victim Impact Statement or other information and the right to be notified of the inmate’s release.

9. The right to be present at all public court proceedings, if the presiding judge permits.

10. The right to a safe waiting area before and during court proceedings.

11. The right to prompt return of any property that is no longer required as evidence.

12. If you so request, the right to have the prosecutor notify your employer that the need for your testimony may involve your absence from work.

13. The right to complete a Victim Impact Statement, detailing the emotional, physical and financial impact that the crime has had on you and your family and to have that statement considered by the judge prior to sentencing and/or entry of a plea bargain and by the parole board prior to taking any parole action.

NOTE: *Article 56 states: “A judge, attorney for the state, peace officer, or law enforcement agency is not liable for a failure or inability to provide a right enumerated in this article.”*

Notice to Adult Victims of Family Violence

It is a crime for any person to cause you any physical injury or harm, even if that person is a member or former member of your family or household.

Please tell the investigating peace officer:

- * if you, your child, or any other household resident has been injured; or
- * if you feel you are going to be in danger after the officer leaves.

You have the right to:

Ask the local prosecutor to file a criminal complaint against the person committing family violence; and apply to a court for an order to protect you. To do so, you should consult a legal aid office, prosecuting attorney or a private attorney. If a family or household member assaults you and is arrested, you may request that a Magistrate’s Order for Emergency Protection be issued. Please inform the investigating officer if you want an order of emergency protection. You need not be present when the order is issued. You cannot be charged a fee by a court in connection with filing, serving, or entering a protective order. For example, the court can enter an order that:

- (a) The abuser not commit further acts of violence;
- (b) The abuser not threaten, harass or contact you at home;
- (c) Directs the abuser to leave your household;
- (d) Establishes temporary custody of your children and directs the abuser not to interfere with your children or any property.

A violation of certain provisions of court ordered protection such as (a) and (b) above might be a felony.

For assistance regarding family violence, contact the Houston Police Department’s Family Violence Unit at (713) 308-1100.

What is a Protective Order?

A Protective Order is a legal remedy for the use and protection of victims of family violence. It can be obtained by filing and application with the District Attorney’s office in the county in which you reside. The Protective Order may be good for up to two years and can supersede any other court orders currently in place. Police can enforce a violation of this order. It may take several weeks to get a final Protective Order. You may contact the Houston Police Department’s Family Violence Unit or one of the resource numbers listed below if you have questions or need help in applying for a Protective Order, or help with planning for your safety in the meantime.

Family Violence Resources

Crisis Centers (24Hours)

Emergency	911
Bay Area Turning Point.....	281 286-2525
Brazoria County Women’s Ctr ...	800 243-5788
The Bridge.....	713 472-0753
Family Time/The Door.....	281 446-2615
Ft. Bend Co. Women’s Ctr.	281 342-4357
Houston Area Women’s Ctr.	713 528-2121
Montgomery Co. Women’s Ctr. ..	936 441-4044
New Horizon Family Ctr.	281 424-3300

Legal Resources

Houston Police Department	
Family Violence Unit	
TTY/TDD	713 731-5889
Central Unit	713 308-1100
North Unit	281 405-6460
South Unit	713 731-5960
Westside Unit	281 584-4900
Harris County District Attorney’s	
Family Criminal Law	713 755-5888
Victim Witness Division	713 755-6655
Harris County Sheriff’s Dept.	
Family Violence Unit	713 967-5743
Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse..	7132249911
Houston Volunteer Lawyers	713 228-0732

Crime Victims’ Compensation

Crime Victims’ Compensation is a division of the Attorney General’s Office. The program reimburses innocent victims of violent crime for some out-of-pocket expenses they suffer as a result of the crime. Crime Victims’ Compensation is available to pay the amount of expense reasonably and necessarily incurred for:

- Medical, counseling, prescription and rehabilitative services.
- Partial loss of earnings because of a disability resulting from personal injury.
- Childcare for minor children to enable a victim or spouse of a deceased victim to continue employment.
- Funeral and burial expenses
- Reasonable costs associated with crime scene cleanup
- Reasonable replacement costs for clothing, bedding or other property taken as evidence or rendered unusable as a result of the criminal investigation.
- Loss of wages and travel reimbursement due to participation in or attendance at the investigation, prosecutorial and judicial process.
- Relocation expenses for certain victims of family violence and sexual assault.

Reimbursement for property damage or loss is not an eligible expense.

To submit a claim, a victim or family member must send a Crime Victim’s Compensation application to the Texas Attorney General’s office. Victims or family members needing an application can access the application via the internet at <https://texasattorneygeneral.gov/cvs/crime-victims-compensation>

Mail application to:
Office of the Attorney General
Crime Victims’ Compensation Division
P.O. Box 12548, Austin, TX 78711-2548
Claims Division: 1-800-983-9933

The **Victim Services Unit of the Houston Police Department** will assist you in applying for Crime Victims’ compensation benefits. Upon request, we will provide you with the necessary claim form; will send the claim forms and any other required documentation to the Crime Victims’ Compensation Division. We will also work with your chosen service providers to assist you in obtaining benefits.

Victim Services

The **Victim Services Unit of the Houston Police Department** is dedicated to positively affect the quality of life for the citizens of Houston and exists to provide assistance to crime victims and their families. Services provided include:

- Criminal Justice Support
 - criminal justice system information
 - referral to assigned detective
 - status of case information
 - arrest notification
- Information and referral to local social service providers
- Notification and assistance in filing for Crime Victims’ Compensation
- Assistance with evidence return
- Personal Advocacy
- On-site crisis intervention and follow-up
- Training to police officers, community groups, and other agencies
- Community awareness and presentations

The Victim Services Unit works closely with various social service and legal agencies within the City of Houston and Harris County and is familiar with a wide variety of resources available.

If you would like assistance, need additional information, please contact the Unit at 713-308-0080 or online at www.houstontx.gov/police/vsu.

Resources

Emergency911
Houston Police Department (HPD)
Crime Victim Liaison 713 308-0080
Homicide Division..... 713 308-3600
Juvenile Division.....713 731-5353
Major Assault Unit..... 713 308-3600
Robbery Division..... 713 308-0700
Sex Crime Unit713 308-1180
Traffic & Accident 713 247-4072

Hotlines
Adult Protective Services800 252-5400
Child Protective Services.....800 252-5400
Crisis Hotline713 228-1505
Crisis Hotline (Spanish).....713 526-8088
HAWC Rape Crisis Line713 528-7273

General
Attorney General
Crime Victims’ Division 800 983-9933
Children’s Assessment Ctr. 713 986-3300
Covenant House (21/under) 713 523-2231
Family Serv. Of Houston 713 868-4466
MHMRA 713 970-7000
Mental Health Association 713 522-5161
Montrose Counseling Ctr. 713 529-0037
TDCJ-Parole Division 713 685-7100
HCCSCD-Victim’s Assistance ..713 220-8935

Hospitals
Ben Taub 713 873-2000
Lyndon B. Johnson 713 566-5000
Memorial Hermann 713 704-4000

If you require immediate medical treatment, the 911 operator will arrange emergency medical treatment or transportation by ambulance to the nearest receiving hospital. All costs for transportation and medical treatment are the responsibility of the victim. You may be eligible for reimbursement of costs, by applying for Crime Victims’ Compensation. Medical examinations of sexual assault victims will be provided at no cost (Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 56.06).

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Victim Services Information
for
Victims and Family Survivors
of
Violent Crimes



Offense Report Number

**Houston Police Department
Victim Services Unit
1200 Travis
Houston, TX 77002**

**Crime Victim Liaison
713 / 308-0080**

You may call the law enforcement agency’s telephone number for the status of the case and information about victims’ rights.